

TRAINING WORKSHOP ON SOCIAL AUDIT

23- 25 January 2005

COMPLETION REPORT

A training workshop “Social Audit” was organized by Development Alternatives at TARAGram, Orchha (Madhya Pradesh) on 23-25 January 2006. There were 25 invitees to the workshop, of which finally 17 participants attended, including one from the Development Alternatives itself. The participants were mid-level representatives of civil society organizations located and/or working in six states, namely - Delhi, UP, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar. The workshop was conducted by Biju Negi and Renu Thakur, both from Uttaranchal.

Social Audit is a comparatively new subject, particularly in the development sector in India. Although the Government of India has recognized the importance of Social Audit and even made it mandatory, there has been very little of it on ground, in practice. Indeed, the concept of Social Audit is still at a nascent stage in the country. Its theory is still evolving, and its role as an empowering tool is as yet little understood and hindered by practical and executive problems. However, some encouraging experiences in the last few years, and now particularly with the ‘Right to Information Law’ having got legislated, the civil society, specially those working on rights based issues, are beginning to realize the increasing value of Social Audit as a tool to empower the people and demand accountability in their development and related works.

As such, this was an initiating workshop – initiating the subject and concept of Social Audit, and the possibilities that it offers, particularly in the development sector. The majority of the participants too had come to the workshop with barely a hazy understanding of the term and were largely drawn, as they confessed, by the novelty of this ‘new tool’ and its stated importance.

The following is a report of the “Training Workshop on Social Audit”.

Day – 1

Session I : Participants’ Introduction

A good breakfast and the Workshop got underway at 1000 hrs, though some of the participants were still to reach the station. Santosh Kumar Pathak, (Training Coordinator, Development Alternatives) welcomed the participants and gave a brief description of the Development Alternatives, its training programmes and of the set-up at the TARAGram campus. TARAGram is spread over an undulating landscape amidst plentiful trees and a stream flowing at its south-east

rear. It is admirable that TARAGram generates its own electricity and has a recycled paper production unit, which is quite an attraction for the visitors to place or passersby to Orchha. Sh Pathak also briefly introduced the Training Workshop on Social Audit and the aims, importance and relevance of organizing a training in this new and developing subject. He also outlined the broad living and related arrangements for the participants during their stay at TARAGram.

With most participants and the resource persons strangers to each other, it is essential that everyone not only get to know each other but also feel a little relaxed in the new environs. In order that this knowing each other go beyond knowing just the names, it was important that the participants be given sufficient time for this. The participants were divided into pairs. Within each pair, the partners were asked to spend some time together wherein each person was to gather information on his/her partner. This mutual sharing was to include at least the following information - on self and the organization being represented; the issues, concerns and projects of the organization along with the individual's role in these; the status of participatory approaches within the organization and in the projects; and the participant's own involvement in evaluation and related aspects of projects.

At the introduction thereafter, each person rose to introduce his partner. And this included a similar approach adopted by the two Resource persons/facilitators.

This was followed by a light-hearted exercise to see if the participants remembered (and, in fact, to enable them to remember) everyone's name.

By the end of it, the atmosphere in the training hall had sufficiently eased to get down to the task of the workshop,

The facilitators outlined the three-day programme, the division of the sessions and what these sessions would touch upon and deal with. More importantly, and particularly as the subject of Social Audit was raw and that this was virtually one of the first full-fledged workshops on it, the facilitators underlined the participatory approach to be taken in the workshop and hoped that the learning in the workshop would be two-way, *i.e.* the facilitators would learn from it as much as the participants.

Session II : Social Audit – An Introduction

The topic of the first session was “Social Audit – An Introduction”. A PowerPoint presentation went simultaneously with the discussions and learning.

The facilitators asked the participants what they understood by the term 'Social Audit'. The responses of the participants reflected that they realized its importance as a tool but really had only a blurred idea of the term – which was part correct, part distant.

The facilitators started by giving a brief background on the evolution of social audit – of how it emerged from the private, business establishments in response to a sense of social responsibility and as a corollary to their 'financial audit'. In the development sector, the use of Social Audit grew from a series of *jan-sunwayi* (public hearings) being carried out across the country and particularly in Rajasthan, on rights based issues.

Discussing the comparisons between 'financial audit' and 'social audit', and also between "public hearings" and Social Audit, the facilitators then dwelt at length on the words 'social' and 'audit' so as to provide a better insight into the concept of Social Audit and develop an understanding of "what" is it. It went that in any programme, project or organization, its social audit could mean (a) its audit by the society, and (b) the audit of its sociological impact. These two possible meanings were seen as major characteristics that differentiated 'social audit' from 'financial audit' and 'public hearing' – that the former is conducted by the people and not individual, financial experts as in the latter, and that more than simply examining the income and expenditures, the social audit seeks to look at the financial accounts from the perspectives of the people or the impact on them.

On the basis of deliberations on the two words – social and audit, and the understanding developed on "what" is Social Audit, the facilitators along with the participants sought to develop a working definition of the term.

सोशल ऑडिट एक प्रक्रिया है जिसमें समुदाय अपने यहां चल रही किसी परियोजना, विकासात्मक कार्य या कार्यक्रम के गुर्-दोड्ड, आय-व्यय, लाभ-हानि, आदि की आले में, सबके सामने, जाँच करता है। क

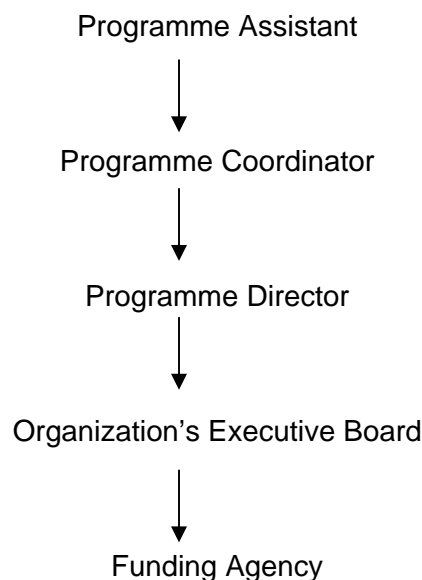
Social Audit is a process wherein the community does an inspection, openly in public, of the quality, income-expenditure, profit-loss of a project, development work or a programme being carried out in its area.

However, it was felt that the above definition was somewhat incomplete, since the workshop had so far considered merely the “what” aspect of Social Audit.

The discussion then sought to address the question – “why” social audit; Why is social audit conducted? Or, specifically, why is social audit considered necessary?

For this, the workshop returned to the term ‘financial audit’ and sought to reflect why a financial audit is conducted or why are income and expenditure accounts maintained, or why these are deemed necessary to maintain, *etc.*

One question led to another, and the facilitators narrowed down to another key word – “accountability” which was seen as the *raison d’etre* for a financial audit or any sort of evaluation or assessment. The participants were asked to develop a chart on the sequence of accountability in an non-government organization like theirs – a simple chart to show who is accountable to whom. What was developed is as follows :



The above hierarchical chart was taken up for further discussion, and “accountability” was sought to be understood through various questions, assumptions and perspectives. The questions raised and discussed were – Who is accountable? Why is a person accountable? What does a person being accountable mean? Who asks for accountability? Why does a person demand accountability? *etc.* The participants responded that accountability means that the person who is accountable is responsible for the proper execution of the said work, project or programme, at his/her level. And that it is the next high person (or persons) in the hierarchy who demands this

accountability, which would mean ensuring the responsibility of the person accountable towards proper execution of the said work, project or programme at his level. The participants agreed that,

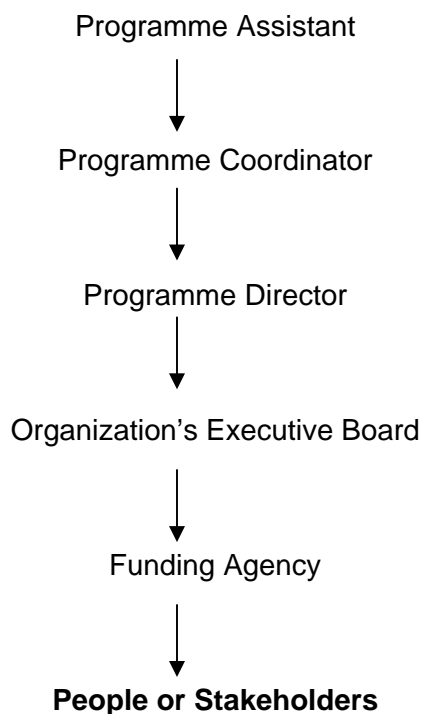
Accountability of a person carrying out a work is an important method of ensuring that the work is carried out properly,

and

that,

In the absence of accountability, the work may be incomplete, done improperly or shoddily or there may be an irregularity in it.

Relating this to Social Audit, the participants were able to surmise that the concept of accountability is inherent in it as well, except that unlike the uni or upward directional accountability in financial audit or in an organization hierarchy, in this case the accountability is to the people, the stakeholders in any work, project or programme. And so the sequential accountability chart now became as follows :



As such, in a Social Audit of a work, project or programme, the accountability is towards the people, the stakeholders, or the ultimate beneficiaries or users of it. And since this Audit is done

by the people themselves, it means that the people or stakeholders are demanding this accountability from those responsible for funding or carrying out the work, project or programme.

The dialogue was extended a little further to ask if the majority of the development work being carried out in the country was being done satisfactorily. Or, whether the accountability in these works towards the people was being observed.

No, the participants said, on both counts.

The next question then was that - if no accountability can be seen in the majority of our development works, is it that there is actually no accountability in these works?

Yes, was the answer, that there is no accountability in these works.

And is it possible that if one does not see any accountability in development works, it is because no one is asking for accountability.

The crux of the problem began to sink in – No one is being accountable, no one is demanding accountability, the people who needed to be accountable are resting assured that no one will question them or demand accountability of them. And so it is that in the absence of accountability the majority of our development works are half carried out, unplanned, carried out improperly or shoddily or there is some irregularity in it!

The facilitators drove the point home that the important question then is that if the development works in our country are faulty, is it not the right or responsibility of the people to demand accountability? This is exactly what happens in a Social Audit – the people demand accountability and inspect that accountability. In other words, in a Social Audit, the people exercise their right to demand accountability.

Having established the main reason for “why” Social Audit, the facilitators then discussed its many other objectives and benefits. Considering that hitherto the people have not been demanding accountability, among the major objectives of Social Audit listed were – developing among the people a culture to question, encouraging the people to protect and assert their rights and benefits; seeking people’s participation in decision making process in local development; empowering the people particularly the marginalized; bringing about transparency in works, projects, programmes and organizations, *etc.* The benefits of Social Audit were seen as –

encouraging people-centred policies and programmes, mobilizing the people, supporting collective action, enlightening the people to take responsibility for their own development, developing social capital, sensitizing the government and the executive to people's issues and problems, among others.

The detailed discussions on “what” is Social Audit and “why”, enabled to participants to now understand better, several definitions of Social Audit, and underlining its various characteristics. The five simple definitions read out were –

Social Audit is a democratic process to ensure public accountability.

Through Social Audit, an organization can understand and evaluate its influence on the community and be accountable to its stakeholders.

Any Social Audit must reflect the ideas and opinions of all stakeholders.

Social Audit is a technique by which the stakeholders can understand, measure, testify, report and improve upon the social dimensions of an organization or work.

Just as financial audit reflects the economic and financial well-being of an organization, so does Social Audit reflect an organization's social well-being in terms of the people who are directly affected by its works.

With this, the first session came to an end.

Session III : Case Studies

The post-lunch session again started with a brief exercise to see if the participants remembered each others' names.

The Second Session took up two case studies to illustrate two diverse range of issues that can be taken up for Social Audit. Case Study No.1 was from east Delhi on corruption in public works. Its PowerPoint presentation was titled “People Decisive in the Development Works in Their Areas”. Case Study No. 2, titled “Building People's Institutions – Women's Resource Centre”. was from Pithoragarh (Uttaranchal) on organizational transparency and women's empowerment.

Case Study 1 :

This case of Social Study was carried out by Parivartan, a Delhi based citizens' movement, which has been, since 2000, using the Delhi Right to Information Act to ensure a just, transparent and accountable governance and for reinforcement of democratic values. In August 2002, using Delhi Right to Information Act, Parivartan (*See Box below*) obtained copies of all the civil works done by Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) in two resettlement colonies in east Delhi - Sundernagari and New Seemapuri in the previous two Financial Years. Sundernagari and Seemapuri are inhabited by lower income groups.

Over the next few months, Parivartan workers went to each block and held street corner meetings. In these, the people were told about the details of works claimed to have been done by MCD in their blocks and the amounts spent on each one of them. It emerged in these meetings that a number of works were half done whereas, the quality would be an issue in the rest. Site visits were also done along with the residents. This gave a fair idea of the gap between what was written on paper and what was actually on ground. Feeling agitated, the people demanded a platform where the concerns could be collectively voiced.

On 14th December 2002, a *jan-sunwayi* was organized in Sundernagari by Parivartan along with the help of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI) and Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) of Rajasthan to discuss publicly the works audited. The public hearing was attended by about 1000 people including local residents of the area, journalists and eminent personalities. In the public hearing, the contracts were read out and local residents testified the status of the work done therein. Out of the 68 works audited and discussed in the public hearing, calculations of estimated misappropriation of funds were done for 64 works worth Rs 1.3 crore. In these 64 works, the total amount of embezzlement found on account of missing items/works was approximately Rs 70 lakhs (*i.e.* items or works worth about 70 lakhs or over 50% did not physically exist at all in these 64 works).

Following the Social Audit, the Delhi Government and MCD passed orders saying that copy of any contract would be made public before it was carried out. The MCD also issued orders that (a) boards be put up at every work site to display the name of the work, name of contractor, sanctioned amount, dates of start and completion, scope of work and other basic information to be put up at every work site; (b) The list of all works completed in the last one quarter to be displayed on the notice boards of all divisional offices.

The campaign before the *jan-sunwayi* triggered a number of debates and discussions in the community. During the *jan-sunwayi*, when each contract was read out and people, especially women, fearlessly testified to the status of execution of that contract. The local MLA's men tried to disrupt the proceedings thrice. However, the public support to the process was so overwhelming that the MLA's men had to leave the proceedings. After the *jan-sunwayi*, *Mohalla Samitis* (Local Area Committees) were formed in every block in Sundernagari which thereafter monitored the execution of any civil work in their blocks.

The MCD Engineers in local Division office who had earlier been putting up a number of obstacles in providing information sought under the Right to Information Act, after the Social Audit, carried out joint inspection of works with Parivartan members. Also, there was a marked difference in their attitude towards public after the *jan-sunwayi*. The officials realized that the public could scrutinize the records any time and were scared as the detailed report of social audit had already been presented to the government.

The Municipal Councilor from the Seemapuri ward also ensured total transparency in the execution of all civil works in the area in future. The *jan-sunwayi* demonstrated the proportion of embezzlement and the urgency with which the issue needs to be tackled. It clearly demonstrated that most of the time, it is not the inadequacy of funds but leakages, which are responsible for poor development.

The presentation was followed by a discussion. The participants could see how powerful the tool of Social Audit, together with the Right to Information, could be in mobilizing people to demand accountability from persons in authority, something that they would otherwise not have done.

Case Study 2 :

This was a case study in which one of the facilitators Renu Thakur was herself intrinsically involved. In a three year project funded by Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (Mumbai) for Rs 6.5 lakhs, ARPAN (Association for Rural Planning and Action, Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand) set up a "Women Resource Centre" (WRC) at Munsiyari (District Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand). The WRC, seeking to focus on knitting and weaving as the major activity, was broadly modeled to act as the hub for an income generation programme. The facilitator provided the background of the project, the socio-economic background of the region that necessitated the project and information on the baseline survey that determined its extent.

Once a major occupation in this predominantly tribal region, knitting and weaving lost their eminence with the closure of trade with the neighbouring Tibet in the early sixties, migration of the men from the region for employment and the subsequent breakdown of support infrastructures and institutions. As a result, there were no changes or developments in the craft, no fresh technical infusion and, of course, there was market no more.

The facilitator, who is the Secretary of ARPAN, said the organization was clear from the very outset that, at the end of three years, it must move out and hand over the assets and everything to the women. As such, the endeavour was that the WRC must not only get properly established and be able to stand on its own feet, but grow beyond becoming a mere training unit and a selling outlet to truly become a women-centered socially-conscious institution of the society and an empowering agent. And its women, from mere weavers, must learn to become managers and entrepreneurs. At the same time, empowerment was not just seen as economic empowerment, but also social empowerment, because a lot of marginalized women, discarded wives and other such women, struggling for their very existence and self-respect had joined WRC and their personal problems could not be ignored. Their individual issues had to be given rightful space in the project, even though there was no specific fund under such a head in it.

The declared intention that the movable and immovable assets of the project would be handed over to the women brought to fore two streams of opinions and conflicts – one, conflict over leadership, and two, the right to the assets of the project, of women coming together in a cooperative. Toward these, the collective of WRC members formally set up “Johar Mahila Bunkar Sangathan” (JMBS – Johar Women Weavers Association), a duly registered Cooperative. This was the first step in the women coming together to form an institution, which they would manage themselves. It was this cooperative which was seen as to be taking over from ARPAN when the time came for the project to wind up.

The project completed in April 2005 and the time came for handing over the assets of the WRC developed in the course of the project to the women and their cooperative. But the question was that to simply hand over the assets, without establishing a future ground for the Cooperative to build on, would mean nothing. It was also important to have some sort of an evaluation done. But any evaluation by an external agency or consultant would not be enough without the women members of the WRC (and now the JMBS) realizing its importance. Participation and Transparency, then, were the two essential criteria.

After considerable thought, it was decided to conduct a Social Audit of the project, wherein the process of handing over by ARPAN and taking over by JMBS could also be completed. The Social Audit would lay bare the nuts and bolts of the three-year WRC project, openly displayed and up for scrutiny of the audience, comprising not just the WRC members but concerned officials of the block, district and state besides representatives of related or interested departments, agencies and organizations and other individuals. It would also generate member participation in this open evaluation. So, it was decided to conduct a Social Audit in July 2005.

Having given the background of the Case Study, the presentation was stopped for the day and the floor opened for discussion.

There were two reasons to not present this Case Study in its entirety – (1) The three sessions on Social Audit were divided up to discuss independently its three aspects – why ‘n’ what, preparation & organization, and conduct. So too in this first presentation of the case study, only the why ‘n’ what of it were given; and (2) The proposed group exercises for the participants were also similarly divided. And at the end of the first day, they would concentrate only on the why ‘n’ what of Social Audit, *i.e.* the background of the issue, work, project, *etc.* that they would take up.

The facilitator’s presentation was followed by a brief questions-answers, but since (as stated earlier) the case study was only partially presented, many of the questions would find their answers in the latter presentations of this case study.

This brought the workshop to the end of the first day. However, before calling it a day, the participants listed out issues, projects and programmes, which could be Social Audited. The participants were then divided into four groups, and each was asked to choose one topic from the suggested list. The following were the groups and their chosen subjects for Social Audit :

- Group 1 : On an NGO*
- Group 2 : Indira Avas Yojana*
- Group 3 : Public Distribution System*
- Group 4 : Self Help Group project of an NGO*

The task given to each group was, like the Case Study 2 presentation, to prepare a background to the project, programme or organization selected respectively.

With this task assignment, the first day of the workshop came to a close.

Day – 2

Session IV

The day started with one of the participants, Sh Shrikant Chaturvedi, on behalf of the trainees, recapitulating the proceedings of the first day. Thereafter, some of the other participants added bits and inputs on the matter of Social Audit touched upon on the previous day.

Thereafter, the participants were asked to present their Group assignments.

Group 1 - Social Audit of an NGO

(Members : Shrikant Chaturvedi, Murari Chandra, Sudeshna Chatterjee, Raju and Animanand Ekka)

Jan Seva Samiti is a NGO working in a tribal dominated region in western Madhya Pradesh since 1990. The vision of the organization is the empowerment of the rural populace, particularly the tribal. Its mission is to create conducive environment for this empowerment of the people in a sustainable manner. The NGO seeks to ensure that the people be socio-economically, politically and culturally self-sustaining. Towards the achievement of its mission and objectives, the organization conducts awareness programmes, capacity building and micro-enterprises development.

After being in the region for 15 years, the *Jan Seva Samiti* now wishes to conduct a Social Audit of itself. The Group believes that the reason for this is that, on the one hand, the organization wishes to take stock of itself, seek a better balance between its vision and work and provide a clearer understanding of its organizational functions. The organization hopes that through the Social Audit, it will ensure transparency and accountability towards the people and thereby gain their further trust, underline its shortcomings and accordingly improve its functioning.

Group 2 - Social Audit of the Indira Avas Yojana in the village

(Members : Deepak Kumar, Vashisth Kumar Singh, Santosh Kumar Pandey and Krishna Kant Singh)

Indira Avas Yojana is a central government programme, wherein one-time cash assistance (Rs 22,000 – 27,000) is provided to the poor, particularly the Scheduled Caste, for (a) Construction of a new house, and (b) Repair of old house. The funds for these come from the Ministry of Rural Development, through the DDC and BDO. The *gram sabha* selects the beneficiaries. However, it is being felt that this programme, howsoever well intentioned

on paper, is riddled with irregularities and shortcomings. It has been observed that under this programme in the village, even those people have been taken benefit who already have a house of their own.

As such, the villagers have demanded and decided to conduct a Social Audit of the *Indira Vikas Yojana* in the area. The objective of the Social Audit is to ensure that the government programme is carried out properly. It is hoped that it will not only generate awareness among the people but also ensure transparency and accountability of the functionaries carrying out the programme.

Group 3 - Social Audit of the Public Distribution System in the panchayat area

(Members : Indrajeet Singh, Jagesh Suryavanshi, Ramavtar Singh and Kamlesh Kumar Singh)

Public Distribution System is among the vital programmes of the central government, wherein essential ration (rice, wheat, sugar) and related items like kerosene oil are provided to the card holding people. These cards are of different categories and there are special cards to the poor, the downtrodden and the helpless, aged people. In the Ramdih panchayat area (Block Bibipur, District Deoghar, Jharkhand), a survey was carried out wherein it was found that the ration was not reaching the people for whom it was meant. The reason found was that the owner of the ration shop would keep the cards with himself. As a result, much of the ration meant for the poor was being siphoned off and sold in black-market. When asked about it, the shopkeeper said that he could not help doing this as he had to pay bribe and commission to the higher-up authorities.

As such, it was decided to do a Social Audit of the Public Distribution System in the panchayat area. The objective of the Social Audit was to provide the right people the right ration at the right rates and at the right time. Towards this, the Social audit was seen to help people (the beneficiaries) be aware about their rights under the Public Distribution System and thereby develop in them a culture to question. The objective of the group in opting for this issue for Social Audit was that the Public Distribution System is essentially for the common man, particularly those living below the poverty line, and as development workers, the concerns of the group members are closely associated with such people in the society.

Group 4 – Social Audit of the SHG programme of an NGO

(Members : Vikas Chaudhary, Sarita Chaurasiya, Vinay Raushan and Dewanand)

This is a project of the NGO working for the empowerment of the women. The socio-economic condition of the women in the region is pathetic, with no participation in decision making even within the family. Because of women staying in veils and in-house, they are also largely ignorant of the world outside. The vision of the NGO is the establishment of a society wherein the on the path to development. Towards this, the NGO conducted a two-year project in which 50 Self Help Groups, comprising 10-20 women each, were to be established. Tasks or activities included in this were opening bank accounts for the women/groups, assisting them in obtaining bank loans, providing them skills trainings, and making them aware of their rights. At the outset of the project, the expected outcomes determined were – the women would be able to conduct their group on their own, they will play an increasing role in family decision making, they will actively participate in the *gram sabha*, they will intervene in the works of the *panchayat*, they will be capable to taking up self-employment and do a self-evaluation of their tasks, and they will also have an equal status on issues and works outside the house.

The project is now complete and the NGO wishes to conduct its Social Audit to see whether the expected outcomes of the project have been met. At the same time, Social Audit will help women develop a culture to question, and the NGO and funding agency to be accountable and transparent to the people.

Each of the above presentation was followed by pin-pointed and serious or, at times, even lively and light-hearted questions, observations, doubts, clarifications and responses between the participant audience and the presenters, on the lacunae or otherwise of the background information provided on subjects or issues for Social Audit. There were some positive gains in the presentations, for instance, the subjects chosen were appropriate and typical and showed that the participants understood the “what” and “why” of Social Audit. But there were also some helpful suggestions like, for example in most cases, more background data should have been provided on the basis of which Social Audit was deemed necessary. Both these aspects were noted and the overall discussions helped in a clearer realization of term and practice of Social Audit.

In the light of the observations and suggestions made, an additional 15-20 minutes were given to the participant groups to firm up the background information in their presentations,.

This was time for Session IV.

Session V

The facilitator started by recapitulating the five definitions of Social Audit surmised on the first day, before going on to the main presentation of the session which was titled “Social Audit – Planning and Preparation”.

It was emphasized that though the actual event of Social Audit may take place over one (or two) days, its success rested on the foundation of extensive planning, thorough groundwork and detailed preparation. This was important because, as it had been reiterated time and again the previous day – Social Audit is a process and not an event. And that it was not a one-time effort.

The facilitators then discussed the gamut of initiatives involved in the ‘groundwork’ from gathering data and information to networking and galvanizing the people. And this could take up anything from two to six (or even more) months. In the Case Study 1, the Social Audit that took place on 14 December 2002, was the culmination of intensive efforts over the last eight months, and that was not the end of it. In Case Study 2 as well, it took ARPAN almost three to four months to actually hold the Social Audit.

The facilitators outlined the steps that may be necessary in planning and preparing for a Social Audit, and the workshop discussed these steps in their details. These were :-

1. *Setting up of a Social Audit Committee* – To take on the responsibility of planning and preparation for and organizing the Social Audit. This will include *gram sabha* representatives, senior community members, stakeholders’ representatives, representatives of facilitating organization, etc. Essential that all sections of the community, particularly the marginalized and the women find adequate representation in this committee.
2. *Determining the Objectives of Social Audit* – The objectives will determine the planning and preparation, as well as the extent of the issue or subject to be Social Audited. It was emphasized that Social Audit would be meaningful in the long term only if it was carried out not simply with the idea of finding faults and playing the blame-game, but to bring about transparency, accountability and improvement in the work culture.

3. *Identification of Stakeholders* – Since, as has been suggested earlier, Social Audit's concern is not personal grudge but society's well-being, it is essential that the views, opinions and say all stakeholders are reflected in the process. Identification of all stakeholders – all people directly or indirectly involved in the work or those affected by or affecting it directly or indirectly, positively or negatively - is important, who could be involved in the process or be invited on the day of Social Audit.
4. *Data and Information gathering* – This is perhaps the most important part of planning and preparation, since it the “proof” on the basis of which one will be able to conduct the Social Audit. The participants discussed what data and information was required to be gathered beforehand – all schemes and people's rights and benefits related to the work; copies of tender documents and contracts, including budget allocations related to the work; copies of correspondence and documents related to work, e.g. work register, muster rolls, bills, vouchers, income-expenditure statements, etc. Since this information is to be mainly gathered from government departments, it is the most time-consuming part of the preparation. With reference to this, it was mentioned that the ‘Right to Information Act’, now applicable all over the country, was an important and powerful instrument which would help civil society organizations in this direction.
5. *Generating awareness, Creating environment and Networking for the event* - This is important from the point of view that the active participation of the stakeholders is vital for the success of the Social Audit process, particularly since it is being seen as an empowering tool. The data and information gathered needs to be disseminated to the stakeholders and other people through all available forms of media (street corner meetings, songs-dance, leaflets-pamphlets, wall writings, et al) so that people are not just motivated to be present on the day of Social Audit but are actually aware of the issues to be discussed and audited. It is also important to network with the related government departments, area politicians and representatives to garner their support and presence at the event, and also intellectuals and senior to be present as independent observers. In this, the Social Audit Committee and the facilitating agency have a major role to play to galvanize the people and all other parties.

Following the presentation, Case Study 2 was taken up again – this time, to illustrate how ARPAN went about planning and preparing for the Social Audit. The facilitator informed that it was indeed a challenge largely because the concept of Social Audit itself is new. Even more challenging was to decide who could be the social auditor or who would facilitate the event. It was important that

this Social Auditor or facilitator be a neutral person, a person not from within the organization but from outside it, for having one's own person for the task would lead to allegations of partiality and even non-transparency.

But as a process, when it was decided that a Social Audit would be done, it was discussed with the target groups – the WRC staff, the JMBS members and ARPAN staff involved in this project. The WRC and ARPAN staff and JMBS were assigned roles and responsibilities – administrative and field tasks, networking, *etc.* Identification of stakeholders and invitees was done at the same meeting – besides WRC and ARPAN staff and JMBS members, other weavers, block officials, people's representatives, the DM, SDM, the person from whom wool used to be bought, representatives of other organizations working in the region. Thereafter the dates, duration and venue (and other logistical arrangements) for conducting Social Audit was discussed and decided.

The required data and information for dissemination and display was duly complied and categorized, and alongside letters of intent and invitation were sent out accompanied with the collected information. There were three types of letters drafted – (1) for the first day of the event (the Social Audit *per se*), to the members and stakeholders along with annexures and copies of relevant data and accounts documents – such as, original proposal with budget, received contract and budget, reports on details of project execution and outcomes; (2) for the second day which was on “future planning”, which included others who could be part of future network or who could provide ideas, suggestions, support in future; and (3) for mobilization of funds for organizing the event, to individuals and funding agencies.

Thereafter, charts for display were prepared. Decision was also taken on documentation of the event.

The facilitator informed that fund mobilization for organizing the Social Audit event was a major challenge, particularly as it was not part of the original proposal. In fact, this was exactly the reason the funding agency gave for not agreeing to this request when approached for it by ARPAN. While this proved to be a blessing in disguise, in the sense that it led to efforts that resulted in contributions by people, friends and different organizations, still, according to the facilitator, it underlined the necessity to include ‘Social Audit’ in the project proposal itself.

The presentation and the Case Study illustration was followed by further question-answers, clarifications and other observations. And this brought the workshop to the luncheon hour!

Session VI

Post-lunch, the workshop gathered for the third part of the presentations on Social Audit. It was titled “Social Audit – Organizing the Event and Follow-up”.

The Social Audit event is a day when the initiatives and efforts of so many people and the community over the last several months will fructify in their demanding accountability in the works, projects and programmes in their area. The conduct of the event will also depend upon the abilities of the facilitators to handle it. The following were discussed as the sequence in the event :

1. *Display* – The data and information gathered by the Social Audit Committee is displayed prominently at the venue. This information can be detailed or summarized, as deemed necessary, but should be displayed in proper sequential order. The display was considered important (a) as a proof, (b) to develop audience interest, and (c) encourage people participation. In fact, everyone agreed that it was a very important element of the event as it would form the basis of all discussions and arguments taking place.
2. *Opening address* – The opening address by the organizers and/or facilitators formally introduces the necessity, relevance and usefulness of Social Audit, in the current context. A background of the work under audit and the entire Social Audit process is also explained properly.
3. *Discussion* – This is the fulcrum of the Social Audit process and event. In this, the facilitator picks up the first point or issue on display, reads its out and invites comments, testifications, *etc.* and conducts the discussions and arguments. It is important that the facilitator encourage, coax, provoke the people, particularly the most adversely affected, the marginalized and the women to speak up. It also often happens that the discussions turn hot, there are accusations and counter accusations and vociferous arguments. It is important that these are allowed to happen and not prevented. But it is equally the responsibility of the organizing committee and the facilitator that the situation does not go out of control and become volatile. And that the social Audit event carries on and is not allowed to be stopped. It really depends on how well the organizers and facilitators are able to handle the situation, and requires patience and tact.

Once an issue is resolved and some decision taken, the next point is taken up.

4. *Conclusion* – At the end, a summary of the day’s proceedings is read out, and a consensus sought on the decisions taken by the community on each issue.

But, it was emphasized, the Social Audit process does not end with the event. It is essential that the entire programme proceedings and decisions taken therein are formally disseminated to the stakeholders. And it can be deemed successful only if the decisions taken are implemented. The Social Audit Committee would need to take responsibility of following these up with relevant authorities. It may also be possible that the community decides to set up a permanent committee to act as a watchdog for future developmental works in the area.

A brief discussion was taken up on the challenges of organizing a social audit. The participants considered that taking government’s or administration’s assistance in organizing social audit, and gathering official data and information, particularly on the income and expenditure would certainly be the most problematic and challenging part of the Social Audit process.

At the end of the presentation, the participants wanted to take a break and do some sightseeing in Orchcha, since later in the evening the entry to the fort there would not be allowed.

Meanwhile, Development Alternatives put up a display on one of the walls of the lecture hall. The display related to the organization of this training workshop on Social Audit, and comprised detailed correspondence on the workshop with the facilitators and statements of expenditures incurred or earmarked under different heads. The display was put up quietly, without making any announcements on it.

Session VII : Case Study

The workshop reassembled three hours later to complete the unfinished session “Social Audit – Organizing the Event and Follow-up”. As in the previous session, Case Study 2 was then presented, from the point of view of how ARPAN went about conducting the WRC social audit in Munsiyari.

The facilitator briefly discussed the preparations at the venue and the display arrangements of information details about the project – its objectives, methodologies and outcomes. The financial details of the project period were separately displayed, including sanctioned budget with heads, payments and expenditures done, profits made and losses incurred, asset's received and added. These were presented in poster form and put up on the walls of the hall so that the

participants/audience could see and read them easily. Also, put up were photographs of the project activities and the products prepared.

With this brief introduction, for the next half hour the participants were shown snippets from the video recording made of the first day of the Social Audit in Munsiyari. Alongside, the facilitator explained the discussions on the day. There were broadly three open house sessions – (a) On the *Process and Administration* of the project, with questions like, How participatory were the processes adopted? How transparent the decisions taken? How were the funds managed?, etc. (b) On the *Achievements* of the project – Have the objectives and goals been achieved? Have the target groups benefited, qualitatively and quantitatively? And (c) On the *Social Dimensions* of the project – Did the project address a felt need of the people? Has the WRC built the capacities of its member - individually & collectively, personally & socially? Do the members feel benefited – emotionally, socially & economically? Do the members feel confident to carry on the institution on their own?

In the snippets of the video film, the participants were able to see, and this is what interested them the most that how, in a Social Audit event, the situation could become volatile, with tempers flying and tension prevailing. So, while the film answered the participants' many questions and doubts raised in the previous sessions, it also generated fresh and enthusiastic enquiries into a host of issues ranging from the role of the facilitator, the need to have 'proofs' and participants of the audience in decision taking. The discussions stretched beyond the normal dinner time, which ultimately was quite delayed.

But, before ending, the groups' task was assigned. Picking from their presentations in the morning, each group was to add their previous day's task on Social Audit of their respective issues and subjects. The groups had hitherto prepared the 'introduction' of their social Audits, and were now asked to add – the "planning and preparation" and "organizing of the event" to their presentations. Effectively, the questions they were now to answer were - How did they go about planning and preparing for their Social Audit? How was the event of Social Audit conducted ? And, What were its outcome?

As it was already quite late in the day, the groups were allowed more time the next morning to work on their tasks. Accordingly, it was decided to start the third day of the workshop a little later than usual.

Day – 3

Session VIII

The final day of the workshop started with the presentations of group exercises.

Group 1 - Social Audit of an NGO

(Members : Shrikant Chaturvedi, Murari Chandra, Sudeshna Chatterjee, Raju and Animanand Ekka)

This was a presentation of Social Audit of *Jan Seva Samiti*, which the NGO itself decided to do after working in a tribal dominated region in western Madhya Pradesh for the last 15 years.

The NGO set up a Social Audit Committee and its members were – 2 district coordinators, 2 accountants and 4 treasurers. The stakeholders included all employees, workers of the NGO, beneficiary communities, funding agency, all local government officials, panchayat members, caste and gender related representatives. The list of invitees also included 2 SDMs, 2 thana-incharge, *arogya-rakshak anganwadi* supervisor, ANM, *panchayat pradhan* and secretary, Revenue Officer, bank manager, media, village school headmasters, other NGO representatives, forest officer, *etc.*

The documents displayed were – Vision and mission statements of the organization, its infrastructure, organization's activities, projects' proposals and budgets, list of donor agencies, list of executive committee, list of employees and other workers, list of beneficiaries, copies of correspondence with the funding agency, the meeting register, baseline survey record report, all registers of SHGs, project contract agreement, all bills and vouchers date-wise, attendance register, salary register, annual reports, *etc.*

The event took place on 30 December 2005 at the Panchayat hall. The timings were 9am – 4pm. The facilitator was the head of another influential NGO. The event started with a prayer. After which, details were provided of Rs 2.5 crores fund received from OXFAM over a five year period. Extensive details of expenditures on various trainings and expenditures under different heads were given.

The presenter then gave a detail of questions asked on the various aspects of the NGO, which highlighted both its achievements and shortcomings. Majority of the targets set by the organization as part of its project were met and socio-economic situation of the people

have generally improved, but there were also some lacunae, which needed to be looked into and further supported, for instance micro-enterprises had been set up but the beneficiaries were facing marketing problems and difficulties. The Social Audit therefore provided the NGO with the need to rework on some of the strategies.

In discussion, some of the participants felt that the presentation was more like that of annual or periodic reportings. The relating of the discussion did not bring out the contentious issues, particularly as it was a 10 years project, nor were debates and discussions on the financial aspects were shown to have taken place.

Group 2 - Social Audit of the Indira Avas Yojana in the village

(Members : Deepak Kumar, Vashisth Kumar Singh, Santosh Kumar Pandey and Krishna Kant Singh)

Indira Avas Yojana is a central government programme, wherein one-time cash assistance is provided to the poor for house construction or house repair. In the village it was felt that the programme is riddled with irregularities and shortcomings. As such, the villagers demanded that a Social Audit be conducted on the programme in two villages.

When it was decided to hold a Social Audit, the extension workers of an NGO active in the region organized the villagers to sit for planning the event. In the meeting, several decisions were taken. It was decided to conduct Social Audit over two days. Tasks and responsibilities were also discussed and assigned – for gathering data, for doing the display, for documentation, and on who would be the facilitator. A lawyer in the village, who was trusted by the community, was identified for facilitating the event. A list of invitees was drawn up, which included external observers like Negiji and Renuji, and the media. Officials in the government department was also identified for networking to ensure their presence on the occasion, without which the event would not hold much meaning. Where the officials were seen as not being responsive, subtle pressure was created on them through advocacy campaigns. The BDO, assured that he, being a stakeholder, would come.

At the event, the display material included copies of applications, documents relating to selection procedure and allotment, the house completion reports by the JE, bank passbook, etc. The facilitator provided the audience with primary information on the objectives of the programme. Then the government officials present were asked to give the people detailed information on the *Indira Avas Yojana* programme. What was important

that they were asked to inform what the rules and stipulations of the programme were, and what was actually on the ground – as seen from the data and records displayed. The moment they started doing this, the community began questioning and pointing out the discrepancies between the rules on paper and the execution on ground. It emerged that the decisions on distribution of funds were taken at a meeting of the *gramsabha*, called by the Block and which the community was not aware of. The facilitator kept the proceedings under control.

Besides this, in an example of transparency, the organizers also gave details of funds received (Rs 1 lakh from OXFAM for six months) for Social Audit and how these were expended. This fund was largely used for field extension work and overall monitoring, and for the logistical arrangements of the event. At the end, Rs 50,000 were saved, and the community took decision on how to use this remainder fund.

At the end of the first day, the achievements of the Social Audit event were counted and it was seen that there was active participation by the women, who also raised the majority of the questions. The accusations also were not only one-way. The BDO counter-accused the people, why they didn't complain to him earlier. The villagers accepted this failing of theirs. More importantly, the villagers gained immensely in confidence, and realized that if people got together they could do wonders on this front. Another achievement seen was that in the entire process of Social Audit, new leadership emerged from within the community.

Another achievement was that there was also a discussion on the Right to Information as a result of which the DDC, BDO gave the people their Mobile telephone numbers for contact any time of the day, in case the people are not provided due information or have problems in future. The entire event was documented by one of the members of the community.

It was not the event that was seen as the most important achievement, but what happened thereafter. The community decided that the *gramsabha* has to meet regularly. It was also decided to set up a Follow-up Committee, but the villagers decided that the existing members of the Social Audit Committee be part of the new committee. In fact, it was decided that the Social Audit Committee be made permanent after inducting three women. This 13 member Committee from two villages, would do the necessary follow-up to ensure compliance of decisions taken at the Social Audit event.

A Government – Non-Government Organization committee was also formed, which would meet every three or four months to review the *Indira Avas Yojana* programme.

Another major decision taken was on strengthening of Development (or *Vikas*) Committee, which is already in existence in Jharkhand.

So there will be these various committees, which will also act as monitors to each other.

The major challenge in the Social Audit process was gathering data and records from the government department.

Questions that came from the participant audience related to further clarification on the staff employed in the process. One participant, while appreciating the various achievements of the Social Audit which would ensure a better programme in the future, felt concerned that the most immediate issue of current irregularity in *Indira Avas Yojana*, was not resolved. To this the presenter responded that the community took a conscious decision to not uproot the houses already constructed, but that in future the programme will be operated through the *gramsabha*. Another question, also thrown open to the participants, was on the concept of funding for Social Audit. Most participants agreed that while funding is required for awareness generation and various other logistical needs, the concept of paid workers was not so welcome as it would raise a lot of moral questions; and that ultimately it is the community that must own the process of Social Audit. Also, it was a matter of debate whether there should be a “project” for Social Audit or should it form part of the awareness generation component of existing projects.

All in all, it was felt that this Group 2 presentation had imbibed all that had hitherto been spoken at the workshop.

Group 3 - Social Audit of the Public Distribution System in the panchayat area

(Members : Indrajit Singh, Jagesh Suryavanshi, Ramavtar Singh and Kamlesh Kumar Singh)

This is the Social Audit of the Public Distribution System in the Ramdih panchayat area (Block Bibipur, District Deoghar, Jharkhand) wherein there are four shops and where irregularity has been found in the distribution of ration to the poor and the needy.

A Social Audit Committee was formed and its members were village *pradhan*, head panchayat member, one BDC member, BDO, Supply Inspector, one member of NGO, two

members of community, one member from media. The committee collected all relevant data.

The data was displayed systematically at the event site. And the discussion went as follows:

The presenter talked about the importance of Social Audit. He also gave details of the Public Distribution System and the facilities therein for the beneficiaries. Then the data and records collected from government sources – details of food grains available, food grain supplied to the beneficiaries were read out in detail.

The community raised questions on inadequate supply, price difference, rightful beneficiary not selected, food grain unavailability on time, *etc.* The ration shopkeeper, concerned ration officers and headman of the panchayat responded to these questions.

At the end of the discussions, it was unanimously decided that the henceforth the ration would be distributed under the supervision of the Social Audit Committee.

Overall, the organizers felt that the biggest challenge in organizing this Social Audit was getting data and information from the government department as well as information on distribution from the shopkeeper.

The discussion that followed underlined that while the presentation reflected a proper understanding of Social Audit, its scope in this hypothetical case study was too narrow and limited. Many questions, which the community could have asked were not shown to have been asked; for instance, what were the decisions taken on irregularities whose records were displayed. In a Social Audit, mere reiterance of complaints is not enough. Some decision ought to have been taken, which is what differentiates Social Audit from *Jan Sunwayi*.

Group 4 – Social Audit of the SHG programme of an NGO

(Members : Vikas Chaudhary, Sarita Chaurasiya, Vinay Raushan and Dewanand)

This was the Social Audit of a two-year project of an NGO, wherein it had to set up 50 Self Help Groups with the objective of developing income generation activities for them and thereby empowering them.

A committee was formed to organize the Social Audit. In order to bring about an understanding in the community on the Social Audit, the NGO contacted people and held meetings with the target groups. The documents collected for the Social Audit were – copy of the original project's proposal and all correspondence, its work register, training register, bills and vouchers, and income and expenditure accounts and the balance sheet. A decision was also taken on the dates and timing (two days, 18-19 January, 10 am – 4 pm daily), the venue (the Community Hall), and the invitees to the Social Audit – Block *pramukh*, other members of the *gram sabha*, bank manager, cluster members, other community members, representatives from the donor agency, media and facilitating organization.

At the actual event, all data and information about the project and its activities, the budget and its account of assets and expenditures, besides photographs and related newspaper clippings. The Bank Manager facilitated the entire proceedings, and the opening address was given by the Secretary of the NGO.

At the Social Audit, the members of the organizing committee fielded the questions of the women and other community members to their satisfaction. The community wanted to particularly know about the expenditures in the project because many people felt that the amount of Rs 9 lakhs for two years was rather on the higher side. The required information had already been displayed and the committee members also explained the allocations and expenditures under various heads, *viz.* total fund Rs 9 lakhs, group leaders training and credit training Rs 3 lakhs, members' training Rs 1 lakh, RLF Rs 2 lakhs, administrative costs Rs 1.5 lakhs, and workers' honorarium Rs 1.5 lakhs.

There were also animated discussion and arguments on the Revolving Fund of Rs 2 lakhs, as to who and how it will be managed now that the project was over. Objections were also raised on the behavior and attitude of some of the workers of the organization.

The decisions taken by the people were – (A) The Revolving Fund would be managed by the clusters, and that (B) The clusters and SHGs would continue to function but the NGO would assist them from time to time.

The programme ended with the community presenting a cultural programme

In the discussion following the presentation, some of the participants were apprehensive that the selection of Bank Manager as a facilitator was not a right choice, as he was one of the stakeholders in the project, and there could have been questions on his role as an agency responsible for providing loans, etc. to the groups. The presentation lacked a detailed discussion on the accounts whether these were justified and appropriate. Also, the various targets objectives and outcomes were not provided. The other important observation made by the participant audience was that although the group had given a list of outcomes of the projects, it did not provide any information on the questions or discussions during the event nor was any indication provided whether the project was ultimately successful or not. By merely stating that the answers and responses by the committee were to the satisfaction of the people, was not enough.

Sometime during the discussions on the second day, one of the participants had wondered that, given the state of things in our country, the Social Auditor too could be bought and thereby doctor the event. This question – “Can a Social Auditor be bought?” was put to the participants, and it generated a keen and concerned discussion, wherein the question was addressed from various points of view, and suggestions for checks and rectification were thought out in case there was such a possibility. The participants came to the conclusion that – (a) Since Social Audit is a long process and done in public domain, the chances of a social auditor being bought are next to impossible; and (b) A single member of the Social Audit Committee can be bought, but not the entire Committee, in which case the defaulter can be easily identified and isolated. Accordingly, suggestions were also made on how to make Social Audit fool-proof.

Overall, the enthusiastic discussions following the presentations showed that the participants were able to (and were willing to) get a grasp of the scope and contents of Social Audit, of what it implied and what it could result in. More importantly, by devising credible presentations on hypothetical Social Audits, they were able to see the possibilities of planning and conducting these in real time and place. They realized that Social Audit is not such an alien subject or a tool after all which needs to be learnt from the alphabet A, but that it is really an issue which is present all around us in our daily lives as development workers and we need only to recognize and engage in the process.

Session IX : Right to Information Act

The success of Social Audit is dependent to a large extent on the data and information on the subject or issue to be social audited, which is shared with the people and which is then openly inspected, testified, challenged and verified. Only if the data and records are authentic, can they stand the test of social audit. Data and records can be authentic if they are from the original

source, and in our development works the original source is the government or its concerned department. But extracting authentic data and copies of relevant records from the government departments is a very big challenge – in fact, it was considered the most challenging by the participants. This is because there is considerable irregularity in development works and no department wants to divulge the proof of their irregularities and lies. Hitherto, the departments have been taking refuge in the Official Secrets Act and other such reasons to not part with authentic data and records on development works. But since October 2005, the Right to Information Act has been promulgated which allows the people access to government data, record or information.

In the process of Social Audit, then, the Right to Information Act is a very powerful weapon - for the people, particularly for the civil society organizations (and definitely those working on rights based issues), But since this is a recent law, it needs to be properly studied, understood and then judiciously used for maximum benefit.

As such, it was considered essential to devote one entire session to this new law.

However, because of the presentations by participant groups and extended time taken in discussions, even if very relevant, also meant that the workshop was now effectively running behind schedule. As such, the session on the Right to Information had to be hurried a bit.

The facilitators made a very short presentation on the Right to Information Act, focusing on its highlights and major explanations – its definition and scope, the definition of information and what all the common man could ask for, and some other highlights.

This was followed by a communal reading by the participants, in turn, of a short paper on the Right to Information by Bharat Dogra, a prominent writer and who has been associated with the 'freedom to information movement' for long. The paper was a short treatise on the law, its major features and how we could use it to the best of our advantage.

The various examples cited by the facilitators (and those in the Case Studies presented earlier), showed that this was one of the most simple laws to have been made in this country. The facilitators underlined the easy usability of this law for the civil society and impressed upon the participants the need to begin using it in their respective areas.

Session X : Evaluation and Conclusion

Post lunch, the workshop came to its last session. The participants were given two sets of questionnaires – one on the organizational and administrative aspects of the workshop, and the other on the topic Social Audit. The latter questionnaire had one question, which was asked at the last and related to the display on the workshop, put up the previous evening by D.A. The display hadn't been announced and now the participants were asked if they had seen the display. Everyone had. The questions asked were, one, what they thought why the display was put up, and two, what did they conclude from this?

In conclusion, some of the participants spoke about the workshop, their responses, critique or suggestions, which they had possibly put in the organizational questionnaire as well. But the most common response was that ultimately, the duration of the workshop turned out to be short, and that a training workshop on this new subject area would have been better over five days.

From the facilitators, the word was that there is need to do more learning on this issue which is likely to be a very important tool for civil society workers in the coming decade. More importantly, the participants were asked to make a small beginning in their respective places of work – if not on Social Audit, then definitely on the Right to Information Act. At least make a beginning – that was the plea.

One small beginning was made – in the form of this workshop, and it is pertinent that it is carried forward!

PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION

Participant	Apparent participation in workshop (Max marks 20)	Quality of comments & responses in workshop (Max marks 20)	Questionnaire Evaluation (Max marks 60)	Overall Evaluation (Max marks 100)
Mr. Krishna Kant Singh	16	17	49	82
Mr. Murari Chandra	15	17	50	82
Mr. Vikas Choudhary	16	17	48	81
Mr. Kamlesh Kumar Singh	15	15	43	73
Mr. Deepak Kumar	11	13	47	71
Mr. Indrajeet Singh	12	14	45	71
Mr. Shrikant Chaturvedi	14	17	38	69
Ms. Sudshena Chatterjee	12	13	44	69
Mr. Vinay Raushan	15	14	39	68
Mr. Santosh Kumar Pandey	13	12	37	62
Mr. Jagesh	9	11	40	60

Mr. Bashishta Kumar Singh*	13	14	31	58
Mr. Animanand Ekka	10	13	33	56
Mr. Ramavatar Singh	11	12	30	53
Mr. Dewanand	9	11	30	50
Mr. Raju S Wankhede	8	10	28	46
Ms. Sarita Chaurasiya**	12	13	-	25+

* *Bashishta Kumar Singh left early and filled his question answer sheet hurriedly.*

** *Sarita Chaurasiya's question answer sheet not available.*

Comments : Vikas Chaudhury, Krishna Kant Singh, and Murari Chandra were young but almost always quick and precise in their understanding and assimilation of a point or an argument. Participants like Shrikant Chaturvedi, Kamlesh Kumar Singh, Animanand Ekka and Ramavtar Singh always spoke with wisdom that came from experience. Vashisht Kumar Singh was all seriousness in his joviality. Sudeshna Chatterjee generally kept a low profile but that was because of her hesitancy in the Hindi language, as was the case with Dewanand. Indrajeet Singh, Vinay Roshan, Santosh Kumar Pandey, Sarita Chaurasiya and Deepak Kumar brought a great deal of enthusiasm. Jagesh and Raju were the quietest of the bunch.

Having tabulated and said the above, the Resource Persons would like to note that in any workshop, not all participants are the same – and a quiet demeanor does not mean disinterest or less understanding. Moreover, the participants also come with the back-load of their individual experiences, opinions and prejudices. Still, the Resource Persons feel the overall participation by the trainees was quite responsive – because of the novelty of the subject but as much because of the participants' own willingness to go the distance to understand its complexities and nuances.

One particular aspect the Resource Persons would like to comment upon – the display by D.A. on the workshop itself. The participants had neither been pre-informed about it nor even told after the display was put up. But every one of the participants went through the display and responded adequately to the query on it in the questionnaire. This was, in a way, a fair measure of the participants' interest and awareness in the workshop and response to the subject of Social Audit.

And so, the novelty of the subject, which could have been a reason for their trifle hesitancy at the beginning, turned out to be an exercise in discovery. The participants were able to readily relate to the subject in the context of their own work with the people – that it was, after all, not such an alien subject. And that, at the end of the workshop, they were able to explore the possibilities of using Social Audit and/or the Right to Information in their own milieu. This willingness to see the subject of Social Audit from the perspective of their individual concerns is ample testimony of their finding this workshop useful and imbibing its learnings.

This workshop was virtually among the very first on the subject of Social Audit. As such, this report would be incomplete without adding that the learning in the workshop was two-way, *i.e.*, the Resource Persons too have learnt from the participants in fair measure.

* * *

BIJU NEGI & RENU THAKUR